task force on inter-linking of rivers and are awaiting approval from the Prime Minister;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government are thinking of any alternative proposal in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) No final decision in respect of the winding up of the Task Force on Interlinking of Rivers has been taken by the Government so far.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Scheme to tackle floods, drought etc.

† 2233. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to formulate any effective scheme to tackle the problem of floods, drought and continuous shortage of potable water in the country;

(b) whether Government are also formulating any effective scheme towards the inter linking of various rivers; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) The primary responsibility for dealing with natural calamities including floods and drought is that of the State Govememnts concerned and the Government of India renders assistance *i.e.* technical, catalytical and promotional in nature.

The Ganga Flood Control Commission has prepared comprehensive plans for flood management for all 23 river systems of Ganga basin. Similarly, the Brahmaputra Board has also prepared master plans for the Brahmaputra & Barak basins and sub basins there under. These plans were sent to the concerned State Governments for follow up action.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Agreement has been reached with Nepal regarding Sapta Kosi High Dam Multipurpose Project and Sun Kosi Storage cum Diversion Scheme and the Joint Project Office to take up the field investigations and preparation of Detailed Project Report has been opened in Nepal on 17th August, 2004. Discussions are also continuing with Nepal for Kamla & Bagmati Multipurpose Projects on rivers Kamla & Bagmati respectively.

Further for effective flood control measures and to exploit the large hydroelectric potential of Brahmaputra basin, the Siang (Dihang) Dam Project and the Subansiri Dam Project to be taken up in three stages each, have been entrusted to National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC). Similarly, Tipaimukh Multi purpose Project on Barak has since been entrusted to North Eastern Electric Power Corporation.

The Central Government is also providing financial assistance to the State Governments for taking up critical flood management and anti erosion works through Centrally Sponsored Schemes. Besides, Brahmaputra Board has taken up critical anti erosion schemes in Dholla Hathighuli and Majuli Island in Assam and Pagladiya Dam Project.

A Centrally Sponsored Scheme namely, "Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme" for rendering financial assistance and technical support to the State Governments to supplement their efforts for providing potable drinking water to the rural habitations is also under implementation. Further Central Ground Water Board has prepared an action plan for drought mitigation in various parts of the country during 2004-05 envisaging construction of 1033 exploratory wells in 16 drought affected States.

(b) and (c) As regards Interlinking of rivers, the National Perspective Plan prepared by Ministry of Water Resources in 1980, envisages construction of storage dams. Generally the storage dams reduce the severity of floods and flood damages considerably by virtue of their capacity and also by way of transfer of flood waters through link canals to water short basins. The Government envisages a comprehensive assessment of the feasibility of linking of rivers of the country in a fully consultative manner.